31st March, 2005. The Commission recommended that this fund should be operated from the proceeds of surcharge on certain Central Taxes, irrespective of any monetary ceiling. To begin with, the Commission had provided Rs. 500 crores to be made available initially from the Central Budget.

Conversion of waste land *vis-a-vis* employment generation

†3132. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 120 million people of the country can be provided employment, by converting the waste land of the country into cultivable land;

(b) if so, the assessment of Government in this regard; and

(c) the names of States where such waste land is available and the State-wise number of persons who can be provided employment, after its conversion into cultivable land?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) As per the 'Wastelands Atlas of India 2000' brought out by the Department of Land Resources using remote sensing satellite data, the total extent of wastelands/ degraded land in the country is 63.85 million hectare. During Tenth Five Year Plan an amount of Rs. 4400.00 crore is allocated for three major schemes of the Department Programme, Desert Development Programme and Drought Prone Area Programme for development of wasteland. In addition, two watershed development programmes namely National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas & Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in Catchments of River Valley Project & Flood Prone Rivers are also being implemented by Department of Agriculture & Cooperation in which allocations are being made by State Governments out of total fund allocated under Macro Management Mode. Under these schemes employment is generated as a result of development of such lands. The State-wise details of extent of Wasteland in the country is annexed as Statement.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Statement

State-wise Wasteland in the country

Area in 000' ha.

Sl.No.	States/UTs	Wasteland
1.	Andhra Pradesh	5175.00
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1833.00
3.	Assam	2002.00
4.	Bihar	2100.00
5.	Chhattisgarh	*
6.	Goa	61.00
7.	Gujarat	4302.00
8.	Haryana	373.00
9.	Himachal Pradesh	3166.00
10.	Jharkhand	**
11.	Jammu and Kashmir	6544.00
12.	Karnataka	2084.00
13.	Kerala	145.00
14.	Madhya Pradesh	6971.00
15.	Maharashtra	5349.00
16.	Manipur	1295.00
17.	Meghalaya	990.00
18.	Mizoram	407.00
19.	Nagaland	840.00
20.	Orissa	2134.00
21.	Punjab	223.00
22.	Rajasthan	10564.00
23.	Sikkim	357.00
24.	Tamil Nadu	128.00
25.	Tripura	2301.00
26.	Uttar Pradesh	3877.00
27.	Uttaranchal	***
28.	West Bengal	572.00
29.	A & N Island	28.00

*Area included in Madhya Pradesh

** Area included in Bihar

*** Area included in Uttar Pradesh

Sl.No.	States/UTs	Wasteland
30.	Chandigarh	0.00
31.	D & N Haveli	7.00
32.	Daman & Diu	4.00
33.	Delhi	14.00
34.	Lakshadweep	0.00
35.	Pondicherry	4.00
	TOTAL:	63850.00

Excise duty exemption on diesel for fishermen

3133. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to reimburse the Central Excise Duty on diesel oil, used by fishermen, and enhancement of present ceiling limit from 35 paise to Rs. 2.25 per litre; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the extent of relief proposed to be given to the fishermen?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The matter of continuing the scheme to reimburse Central Excise Duty on diesel oil is currently under consideration of the Government. The rate of relief to be extended to fishermen would be arrived at during finalisation of the scheme.

Exemption of royalty for HF radio sets in A.P.

3134. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh Government has sought exemption of royalty and licence fee, payable to the Ministry of Telecommunications, on very High Frequency radio sets/shore communication stations, used by the fishermen; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto and the relief proposed to be given to the fishermen in this regard?